

The Hampden Hippocrat

A Bulletin for the Hampden District of the Massachusetts Medical Society

VOLUME XI

SPRING, 1955

No. 2

FRUIT OF OUR HERITAGE

Since the clear perception of the Father of Medicine penetrated the murk of superstition, progress has followed though at uneven and hesitant rates. A long succession of medical observers have taken the path that Hippocrates blazed, adding bit by bit to the store of human knowledge and implementing the art of medicine with improved methods and instruments.

Now and then milestones have been set up to mark an epoch-making discovery. The names of Ambroise Pare, Lannec, Koch, Pasteur and Lister are honored for such contributions. Morton's discovery of ether and Banting's of insulin were truly epochal in promoting comfort and lengthening life expectancy. All of them had been taught to examine and to think and had not been trammelled by precedent or dogma.

The latest fruit of the Hippocratic heritage, of course, is the method discovered by Jonas Salk for immunizing of our children against poliomyelitis that is effective in better than 80 out of 100 cases. With exemplary patience and restraint, Dr. Salk waited for confirmation of encouraging experiments in the laboratory before releasing his epoch-making announcement. Recognition has been prompt and widespread, from the White House down. Dr. Salk has been especially rewarded as the first civilian ever to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. Quite characteristically, he has diverted from his own pocket the flood of contributions that has poured in, to a Foundation to help finance the work of humanitarian relief.

In the past twelve months the hopes and fears of the world have been brought to a culmination that erupted on the 12th of April in veritable nuclear fission fashion with his announcement that success had been achieved.

Hippocrates would have been amazed to witness confusion and turmoil that followed, with this life-saving measure becoming a political football kicked about by politicians and political-minded labor leaders who sought to further their own ends without regard to the medical profession whose province it is to protect the health of the public. The latest discovery of possible incidence of active polio following inoculations of some vaccine has served to check for the time being, possibly permanently, this unseemly scramble for preferment.

As to modern disciples of Hippocrates who have benefitted by this heritage, they are pledged to heal the sick and to prevent illness to the best of their ability and without regard for recompense. Diphtheria, tetanus and typhoid fever have been controlled by preventive treatment through regular channels. To their way of thinking there is no reason why prevention of poliomyelitis may not be handled in the same manner, as soon as the factors of safety have been fully established. When the cost of treating poliomyelitis with possible prolonged hospitalization, including the expenses entailed in nursing care and rehabilitation, the fee for three office calls, even including the cost of the vaccine, is small indeed.

(Over)

Hampden Hippocrat

"Life is short and art is long, the occasion fleeting, experience fallacious and judgment difficult."
—Hippocrates, 430 B.C.

This Issue 700 Copies

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(FRUIT) If the vaccine is supplied by the State, as is the current practice in the prevention of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus, the cost is by no means prohibitive, and no one has had to go without such protection because of the expense involved. And remember, physicians will not strike and jeopardize the public good.

S. Q. Lapius

TIMELY PARABLE

Who would not prefer to qualify as a certain Samaritan did, according to Luke, on his journey to Jericho rather than pass by on the other side away from the call for help? That wish is easily granted, but each man must decide for himself whether or not he will become a good Samaritan to his own Medical School that stands in the need of prayer and of more tangible resources. Furthermore, the School is no stranger in distress. The foundations of professional life stand directly upon the teachings therein provided.

That is a debt that never can be paid, but many other men must join their fellows who already have "taken out their two pence" and have promised to repay more on the return trip.

COMPLIMENTS

T. P. Sampson
Springfield

WESTFIELD CALLING

Dear Hippocrat:

I am writing concerning the Cancer Teaching Clinics which are held at Westfield State Sanatorium usually twice a year, once in the Spring and once in the Fall.

The most recent meeting was April 20 at which time a film on "Oral Cancer and its Diagnosis" was shown following which Dr. Irving Meyer presented a talk on the diagnosis of intraoral lesions. Dr. David Jennison then discussed the diagnostic significance of a lump in the neck following which radioactive isotopes were discussed by the x-ray department members, Dr. Bruce Alicandri and Dr. Haag Bozigian.

For the last 2 years, we have tried to present subjects which would be of interest to the general medical profession in the western part of the state, and we would appreciate, as announced at the meeting, any suggestions as to topics that might be of particular value or interest to the majority. Any suggestions along these lines could be sent to Dr. Knowlton, the superintendent of the hospital. Dr. Fred Hopkins, the clinical director, or myself as chairman of the Educational Committee.

Donald R. Hayes

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RED FACE AND POOR RETURNS

Dear Hippocrat:

In the minds of a few fellows there seems to be some misunderstanding about the Joint Meetings of Hampden District and the Women's Auxiliary. Attendance at such meetings is limited to members of the District and to members of the Auxiliary. It causes no little embarrassment to the officers of the District when non-members of the Auxiliary seek to attend. Please do not let this happen.

For the record let it be stated that out of a total membership of 478 only 247 returned reply postals for the February dinner meeting. 169 accepted; 78 declined. Out of the 169 acceptances, 45 failed to attend without notifying the secretary that they had changed their minds. The result was that we fell short of the guarantee given the hotel and had to pay for dinners that were not eaten,—an all-round waste, of food, of money and human effort. Why?

Allen G. Rice, Sec.

LUNG CANCER CONTROVERSY

Pat McGrady, science editor of the American Cancer Society, has authored a new pamphlet on the controversial subject of cigarettes and lung cancer. It may be obtained from the Public Affairs Committee, 22 East 38th Street, New York.

Mr. McGrady, who has done an excellent piece of work, states that the evidence of a relationship between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, while impressive statistically, is variously interpreted by leading scientists. He reviews 12 surveys which show that "in every study the percentage of cigarette smokers was greater among lung cancer patients than among healthy people of the same age, sex, and socio-economic status."

No effort was made to give a categorical answer to the question: "Should I stop smoking cigarettes?"

"Adults must decide for themselves whether or not to stop," Mr. McGrady said. George F. Lull, Sec., A.M.A.



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SPRINGFIELD 20

BOSTON 7

It was by \$13,000 that Springfield showed its superiority over Boston in the recent Muscular Dystrophy Drive.

The questions raised by this disproportion are many. It is doubtful that ten cases of dystrophy can be found in this area.

Springfield's contribution to research in this disease is not to be deplored and probably comes near to what it should be, provided our budget for other matters of health were correspondingly high instead of below that of liquor, cosmetics and tobacco.

Doctors know that vast sums for research are being donated by the large industrial organizations. Doctors are aware of the national government's similar interest and investment. These donors take measures to be sure that these funds are not wasted.

Doctors are not blind to the waste of money in medical matters.

Blue Cross is quite concerned as they are affected financially.

How many patient days in hospitals are wasted because of unnecessary delay in discharging patients, to say nothing of the patients who should never have been admitted.

Doctors, patients and hospitals are at fault.

Four million dollars is being wasted medically yearly in this item alone, if each doctor in the United States keeps one patient one day in a hospital unnecessarily.

If this is true among the medical intelligentsia, what waste must exist in organization providing medical care without proper medical supervision.

Their ignorance of medical matters does not excuse their failure to seek adequate medical advice. More team work is needed.
J.A.W.

MEDICAL READER

The May 2nd issue of "Life" magazine should remind medical readers of the debt they owe to Dr. Samuel Johnson's father who allowed the boy to browse at random through his library instead of standardizing him through formal education. A rather disheartening revelation of posterity's application of the Doctor's superior results to inferior posteriors is a bit discouraging, however.

It is to be hoped that no such mishandling of the splendid present-day Webster-Merriam Unabridged Dictionary will be uncovered in any 20th Century retiring room. The well-established popularity of mail order catalogs should preclude similar desecration, even in Scottish "Little Houses". The Hampden District should be proud to have Lexicographer Noah's successors issuing at stated intervals from their own home territory authentic information on so many subjects and correct usages of the English language. Outside of Holy Writ, the unabridged tome is the most indispensable book of our English-speaking world of literature. It is advisable to use the India paper edition if frequent consultations are necessary because it is so much less ponderous.

HOT FLASH

The *life expectancy* in India has risen from 27 to 32 years in the past five years and the infant mortality rate has dropped from 158 to 123 per 1,000.

Science News Letter

COMPLIMENT

Curran-Jones

WEST SPRINGFIELD

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Springfield

WHO PAYS FOR FREE MEDICINE?

The same one who pays for insurance awards, good roads, education and the high cost of living.

You may pay for it directly without overhead, or indirectly with service charges.

The day of compulsory free automobiles, bread, or other merchandise has not yet arrived.

Perhaps the government will hire someone with increased income tax monies to give these services "gratis".

Perhaps it would be better to pay as we go!

J. A. W.

T—V REPORTING

As announced in the winter issue of Hippocrat, the Hampden District Medical Society on April 22nd at 7:15 P.M. launched a T-V program to acquaint the public with authentic medical information with an eye to improving public relations. We are glad to report that Drs.

Thomas Reilly and John A. Burke acquitted themselves with credit, not to say aplomb. In explaining the attitude of the profession toward administering the Salk vaccine to prevent poliomyelitis, the point was made quite clear that this procedure of preventive medicine should be handled precisely as other methods have been such as those used for years in eliminating diphtheria, tetanus and typhoid fever. That is to say, the regular office charge plus the cost of the vaccine when it is not furnished by the State.

Some viewers, however, do not enjoy good reception over channel 61. It will be interesting to see whether the change to channel 22, if allowed, will improve the distribution of medical information to the entire region. In behalf of the fellow members, the Hippocrat wishes to thank these two gentlemen for giving their time to this work. Will their next move be an audition with Ed Sullivan? More power to them, and far better reception!



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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NEWS

At a recent executive committee meeting, it was felt that the members of the District might be interested in some of the matters taken up by the executive committee and accordingly we present here-with two or three items.

1. The executive committee has endorsed a suggestion by the United Fund of Springfield that a survey of rehabilitation facilities in W'Mass. be undertaken with a view of consolidating some or all of them to avoid duplication of service.

2. The committee has agreed to sponsor in the fall, a Children's Accident & Poisoning Prevention Week, in cooperation with the area druggists.

3. It was voted to investigate the possibility of establishing a poison information center in W'Mass., such as now exists in Boston.

4. It was voted to meet with representatives of area newspapers in an effort to secure and maintain improved public relations for the profession.

SCIENCE FAIRS FOR STUDENTS

Leadership by the medical profession in the broad field of science was demonstrated by physicians of three Indiana counties recently when they joined in sponsoring a Regional Fair that was one of many regional shows held all over the United States in connection with the Sixth Annual National Science Fair. Two winners from each region will compete in the finals for national titles at Cleveland, May 10-12.

"This is a natural for the medical profession," said Dr. Ralph C. Eades, of Valparaiso, who acted as chairman of the committee of doctors for the three counties—Porter, Lake, and LaPorte. "The

project," he said, "should be supported locally by medical societies throughout the country. Each medical society should have a special committee to work with school authorities in their communities."

Reasons:

"1. It places the medical profession in direct contact with a group of scientific-minded youngsters and provides a fertile field from which to draw our future physicians and members of professions allied to medicine.

"2. It will be hard to sell scientifically trained young Americans on cultism and quackery, for their scientific training will enable them to distinguish between the true and the false.

"3. The work of these youngsters is an example of what can be accomplished through American individual initiative."

The fair's director, Robert McCord, of the Chesterton high school, and Elmer C. Dunbar, the principal, were assisted by a panel of 11 judges, composed of representatives of industry and the press, and headed by Ancil Thomas, head of the physics department, Valparaiso University. Thomas A. Hendricks, secretary of the A.M.A. Council on Medical Service, served as one of the judges.

Medical exhibits covered many subjects, including digestion, anatomy, tooth decay, reducing pills, chemistry in cosmetics, water testing, tooth paste, mineral deficiency in plants, water filtration, diabetes, effects of preservatives on bacterial growth, and hormone feeds.

One particularly ingenious device shown was an automatic book page turner built for a polio victim whose chest and arms had been paralyzed. The page turner was operated by a foot-controlled push button.

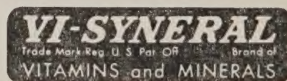
from A.M.A. Secretary

George F. Lull's Weekly Letter

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THE NEW BROOM

The Committee on Nominations of the M.M.S. met on April 6th last at the call of Secretary Robert Buck in the Society headquarters; seventeen of twenty nominating councilors were present in person or represented by alternate. Edward P. Bagg of Hampden was elected chairman to serve the next organization meeting of the Committee when the new nominating councilors may participate.

The candidacy of Conrad Wesslehoeft to President having been confirmed at the annual meeting of the Society by his selection as president-elect, the following slate resulted from the action of the meeting:

President-elect, for 1955-56 Harold R. Kurth, of Essex North.

Vice-president, Wm. A. R. Chapin of Hampden.

The other officers were re-elected namely, Secretary, Robert W. Buck of Charles River; Treasurer, Eliot Hubbard of Middlesex South; Assistant Treasurer, Norman A. Welch of Norfolk.

Drs. Welch and Kurth were continued in the capacity of delegates to the A.M.A. House of Delegates, and Dr. Nicholas Scarcello of Worcester was named as delegate to replace Dr. E. M. Chapman who requested release from this service. The alternate delegates were continued without change with the exception of Dr. John Conlon's nomination to fill the unexpired term of Dr. Scarcello.

By a curious coincidence, the same individual was in the chair who had directed the Committee on By-laws and Council Rules when the Worcester method of nominating delegates was adopted over his protest, removing some from the duties of the President and depositing it in the lap of the Nominating Committee. The committee was faced with

the dilemma as was predicted of no knowledge of nominees for several officers, nor of the capabilities or the availability of candidates. To prevent future repetition of this unfortunate situation, it was voted to petition the council to refer to the Committee on By-laws and Council Rule for consideration the suggestion that the Committee on Nominations shall organize at the time of the October Council meeting, when many of the members will be in Boston, and to meet again in connection with the February Council Meeting for definitive action. This would allow time for the study of candidates and for the chairman to ascertain details such as availability and willingness to serve.

The Hippocrat would like to extend to Harold R. Kurth of Lawrence in behalf of his fellow-members of the Hampden District congratulations and best wishes for this new honor. We know from his years of unflagging interest in the work of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and his ability to make himself heard and felt, that the affairs of our Society will be in good hands. To our own Bill Chapin "bravo!" for bringing honor to Western Massachusetts through the office of Vice-President. Brother Sossman continues to overwhelm us with obligations by presenting medical truths in a sprightly, yet forthright manner that causes them to stick. He will make a worthy Orator for next year.

NOT SO HOT

SUSPENDERS NOW are being made "extra-wide" with built-in pockets for carrying combs and nail files. Their faille weave is strengthened with rayon, and the pocket flaps are made of kid leather.

Sc. N. L.

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EDUCATIONALLY SPEAKING

Post graduate education has become a full time business in which every state medical society takes part. Time was when the physician in general practice took off a month or six weeks to go to New York for a refresher course, but now the mountain has come to Mahomet and the New England post graduate session which had its tryout years ago in Cambridge at Memorial Hall has now expanded to the Postgraduate Medical Institute, an imposing name. The eight months course given in Boston plus those in the various districts constitute a program planned with the idea of keeping or bringing the practicing physician up to date. But we have 8660 doctors in Massachusetts and only 392 registered in the courses, in fact in comparison with other parts of the country the New England postgraduate courses have almost the lowest attendance. This may seem worse than it really is for most of our

local hospitals have lecture programs, the American Academy of General Practice has frequent brush-ups, and What Goes On is a stimulus to attendance at a particular lecture not included in the Postgraduate series. Nevertheless the sessions should be better attended and in order to achieve this, they must fit the needs of the largest number of doctors. The greater proportion of the medical profession is made up of doctors in general practice, and yet the courses are not geared to their needs, too much theory, and too little practical instruction. There is one thing which is nobody's fault and yet has a great deal to do with the value of these sessions, and that is the lack of good teachers, and another is the need for more visual instruction, by the illustration of cases. That is why the Interstate Post graduate Assembly is so wonderfully successful, and speakers do not get up and just talk, they have cases to illustrate what their points are. To know

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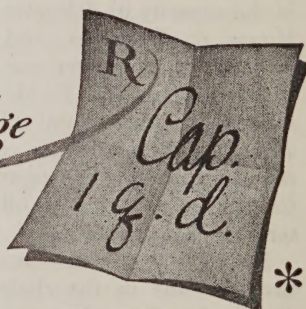
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one's subject and know how to present it are seldom found in one individual, but in order to appeal to the doctor who has taken time out to attend these lectures, the teacher is as important as the subject. It seems to us that the time has come to make postgraduate sessions available to all by television, and by instructors chosen for their knowledge and ability to teach, even if they come from some other part of the country. The continued growth of the Institute however, is to the great advantage of the medical profession in not only by keeping it alert and well informed on measures which contribute to the well being of the patient, but also to maintain the public's confidence and trust.

E. D.

THE MAKINGS OF AESCULAPIUS

You must pardon my use of the first person singular, I who discovered quite by accident the sparkling discourse by my friend, the late John Homans which he delivered at the Spring dinner of the Aesculapian Club of Boston six years before he died in June 1954. I missed that dinner in more ways than one. Principally because for more than a dozen years now I have brazenly employed the exalted name, thinly disguised, of the God of Medicine as my *nom-de-plume* and so can claim a valid interest in his life. Then again because John sprinkled his talk *ad lib* with I's, and I like his style. It is incisive and effectual as the scalpels with which he dissected out thrombosed blood-vessels better than most surgeons.

This revelation of the Homans' wit confirmed an earlier impression that I gathered as once we watched the dress parade of a Kiltie band from a hotel veranda in Oban. To me the spasmodic seizures exhibited by the resplendent drum major amounted to *le plus grand mal*, nothing less. There was an answering twinkle in John's eye, but he with-

held comment,—because of Celtic heritage, perhaps? That was almost twenty years ago. Listen to John Homans' findings now, entitled 'Three Thousand Years Ago',* with few deletions. S. Q. L.

During the four A.M. wanderings—more frequent as we grow older—, when the mind becomes abnormally active and we think especially of those things which we would like to have said during the day, I found that my thoughts were attempting to follow Aesculapius into the past, wondering what he was like and how he actually practiced medicine.

I was stimulated to dip into sources of which I will tell you more presently. First of all I discovered to my astonishment that this is his 3000th birthday. Naturally there are uncertainties about this date. There is the difficulty which all ancient peoples must have experienced; counting backwards before the Christian era—a sort of "Through the Looking Glass" method which must have been very confusing. At New Year's parties in the days of Aesculapius, for example, when drinking to the coming year one must have said, "Well, ladies and gentlemen, good-bye to 1053 and here's to 1052." However, as I shall show you in a moment, there is certain evidence placing our Aesculapius very accurately in the Trojan War and I assure you that no one can prove that any other date will do. He was born 3000 years ago in January, 1052 B. C.

About his parentage there is, of course, a traditionally romantic mystery. His mother, the nymph Coronis, was loved by Apollo—in a glade, naturally. You think of a nymph as a sort of fairy who lives in the sea, in a wood, even in a tree or a stream. Actually, in both ancient and more recent literature, every attractive girl is apt to be referred to as a nymph—beautiful, charming and with sex appeal, of course. You will recall, perhaps, the lines of the 18th Century British poet: "Ten cups of tea, with grief I speak, had now constrained the nymph to leak."

* Harvard Medical Bulletin April 1955
Reprinted by permission.

MAKINGS, Continued

Nymphs have always been very human, and Coronis was no exception. Though loved by Apollo, she is said to have been slain by him when he found that she had been so unfaithful as to marry a mortal. Apollo then delivered the child he had fathered, from the womb of his mistress after her death—a Caesarian section 1000 years before Julius Caesar, as the obstetricians should note. Thus tradition has it, but I submit to you that the story is only a polite fiction. Coronis was a girl of good family in the town of Tricca in Thessaly—known as the land of horses. She was deeply in love with a young man, without money, of whom her parents disapproved. Indeed, they had betrothed her to a rich, eligible, elderly friend of the family. However, in the spring of 1053, Coronis found herself in trouble. She was in a family way, and, of course, went right to her mother. It was then given out that she was beloved of Apollo, a matter in that day very creditable to all concerned, and the marriage to the elderly suitor was soon carried out. The elderly suitor didn't mind and Aesculapius was the result. We can keep his divine parenthood in the background from now on. Aesculapius, in later life, used to refer to it rather humorously if he felt like it, speaking of "my old man, the Sun God," though he wouldn't permit others to do so.

But it is fortunate, as it turned out, that Apollo's name was chosen. For Aesculapius was thus naturally destined for medicine. He was given a first-rate education and in due time was apprenticed, as we learn, to the Centaur Chiron, who was thought to have superior knowledge of all the best herbs of the day. Well, you know what a Centaur was. Isn't this really a way of saying that Aesculapius was trained by a successful, busy practitioner who spent most of his life visiting his patients on horseback? I think so. When next we hear of our hero he is chief of one of the great Greek Clinics, that of Cos, which we know as the headquarters of Hippocrates, some

hundreds of years later. Hippocrates is said to have been the eighteenth successor of Aesculapius in direct line.

Medical practice in ancient Greece was carried on not only by general practitioners, but in great clinical centers, temples as a rule, often with mineral springs, very much like the great inclusive groups of today, as at Battle Creek or the Mayo Clinic. There were specialists in ophthalmology, in orthopedics, and in pediatrics—observe the Greek origin of such titles. There was active rivalry between these centers and much wealth to be obtained. Actually Aesculapius is accused by Plato of charging large fees and thinking too much of money. He was in the prime of life at the time of the great Trojan War and so we hear without surprise that he was invited to be Chief Surgeon of the Greek Expeditionary Force during the last years of that ten year siege.

Now I must take you back to the beginnings of this war. In 1012 B. C. a beauty contest was held to choose Miss Asia Minor for that year. The affair was widely advertised. Preliminary selections were made in Greece, the Aegean Islands, Syria, and other countries bordering on the eastern Mediterranean. At last the choice was narrowed to three such perfect creatures that they have come to be regarded as the Goddesses Hera, Athene and Aphrodite. Troy was made the scene of the finals, and Paris, the gayest young bachelor of that city, was selected to choose between them. Paris was a son of Priam, a prince in his own right, and brother of Hector. He gave the prize, of course, to the girl who has gone down in legend as Aphrodite, and then in his characteristic way made violent love to her. She would have none of him, being already engaged, but to console him promised that he would soon captivate the most beautiful woman in the world. This suited Paris very well and, in his travels about the Aegean Islands and its shores, he kept his eyes open. In Sparta, he met Helen, the stunning wife of Menelaus, and it was love at first sight. Helen ended by deserting her

from an editorial in the J.A.M.A.
(156:991, Nov. 6, 1954):

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MAKINGS, Continued

husband and small daughter, eloping with Paris to Troy. Menelaus, as you know, was one of the great men of Sparta, brother of Agamemnon who, in effect, was King of Greece. Naturally the Greeks, a warlike lot rose in wrath. The Trojans wouldn't return Helen and the ten years' war began. It was only a siege in a broad sense. Troy was at the head of a confederacy of all Asia Minor. And so the Greek invaders had much on their hands. The fighting dragged on until the time of which Homer tells us, when a supreme effort was made. All the military and naval services were reorganized and it was then that Aesculapius was invited to become chief surgeon of the G.E.F.

Covering the last phase of the siege, we have Homer's account in the *Illiad*, in which Aesculapius and his sons, Machaon and Podalirius, are mentioned only rather incidentally; but fortunately there are other sources, in the form of manuscripts, more or less fragmentary, but of great interest to scholars. One such has for long been handed down in my family. When I tell you that the author is recorded as Ian Homer you will guess that the name is a corruption of Homans and will understand how I happen to have access to it. The story is called the Psorad, a name evidently related to the Greek Psora, or itch. But whether this is an allusion to an unfortunate physical weakness of my ancestor, or refers figuratively to his itch to impart knowledge, is unknown. In the pronunciation of Psorad the P is silent, as in pshrimp, to subdue expectoration. Actually, the work is a sort of medical history of the siege and purports to contain quotations from Aesculapius's own memoranda. It is a human document, supplementing the very human document, supplementing the *Illiad*.

From such sources, we learn much of the medical as well as the strictly military and naval organizations in the G.E.F. Subdivisions of the surgical services existed, notably an orthopedic division. A san-

itary problem was recognized. Indeed this latter service comes at once to the fore in the *Illiad*. It will be recalled that Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus, was the commanding general. In the course of one of his local campaigns, or raids, to support the troops in Asia Minor, he carried off and appropriated for himself a beautiful young woman named Chryseis, the daughter of a priest of a temple of Apollo. Agamemnon refused a ransom from her wealthy parents. And so Apollo smote the troops with a pestilence, or so it was believed. Conditions were so bad that the matter was fully discussed at a meeting of the General Staff. The various minor leaders had their say, Achilles, Patrochilus, Odysseus, and others. Feeling ran high. Of course Agamemnon was urged to give up his girl. He replied that she was superior to his wife in many ways—better looking, more intelligent, a better talker and housekeeper; said he wouldn't give her up on any account—a very imprudent statement on his part because it got back to Clytemnestra in Sparta. She not only took up with a neighboring kinglet, but stabbed Agamemnon in his bath upon his return home. But to return to the Staff Meeting. All maintained that the only hope of getting rid of the pestilence was to hand back the girl to her father. Achilles, who had acquired a girl of his own named Briseis, got particularly excited. He said that his commanding general had done all his fighting against people who were not much good anyway, and moreover that he was winesoaked, dog-faced, and deer-hearted. If that isn't calling him a drunken, cowardly S.O.B. the Greek language must have lost its tang. At about this point old Nestor stepped in and prevented any sword-drawing, though Achilles never stopped growling. Finally, Agamemnon said he would give up his girl if Achilles would give up his. Here the meeting broke up. Actually Agamemnon sent Chryseis home and at the same time detailed a strong squad of men to remove Briseis from Achilles' tent. Achilles had to let her go, but was so angry and disgusted that he withdrew from the

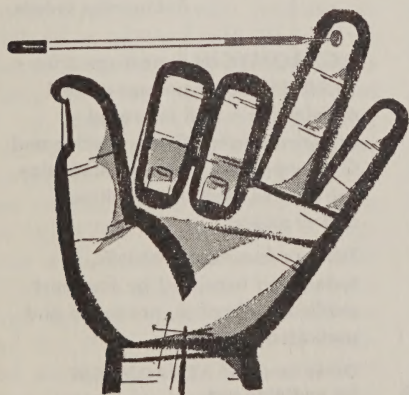
MAKINGS Continued

siege, with consequences that have been fully described and of which I will presently remind you. Of all this Aesculapius was an observer. He goes on record as saying that the pestilence was really an outbreak of very concentrated chills and fever, to be expected in an army on that low coast in the autumn. He had little interest in the Apollo angle, saying that if "my old man, the Sun God" had really had it in for Agamemnon, he would have got his friend, Poseidon, to drown him on one of his local sea trips.

And now for the results of Achilles' disaffection. During his absence, Hector, Paris' brother and the best of the Trojan fighting men, got particularly busy. He organized a sortie, burned a lot of Greek ships, and did a good deal of damage in actual fighting. He engaged Achilles' best friend Patrochlus in a hand-to-hand conflict and killed him, though Patrochlus was actually wearing Achilles' armor. All this finally was too much for Achilles, who gave up his obstinate grouch and came back into the battle. Of course, Hector was his main object. He caught

Hector outside the walls and chased him three times round the city on foot before bringing him to bay. The ensuing fight is described in the *Illiad* as a sort of duel. Achilles hurled his heavy spear at Hector, who ducked, so that the spear flew over his head. Then Hector threw, and the spear bounced back off Achilles' shield. At this point, Hector drew his sword to come to close quarters, but Achilles in some way recovered his spear—the story says that Athene handed it back to him—and Hector was at his mercy. He drove the weapon into the joint in his armor (the armor Hector had taken from the body of Patrochlus) at the root of his neck. Hector knew he must die and, being able still to speak, begged that his body be given to his aged father, Priam. But Achilles tied him by the heels to his chariot and dragged him round the city. He was in no mood to be coaxed.

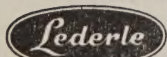
Still the siege was not over and there was trouble in store for Achilles. Let Aesculapius tell the story: "I was inspecting one of the advanced dressing stations when Achilles came limping in. We all thought he had merely sprained his ankle

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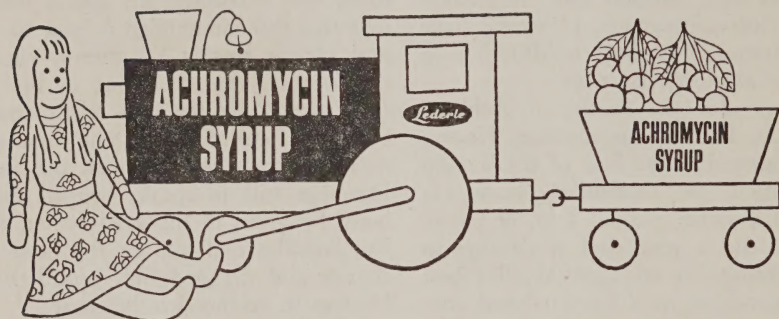
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MAKINGS Continued

because it was known that he had never been wounded. Indeed, it was thought that he must have some sort of divine protection. As it turned out later, he had always been nervous about his heels. It happened that as he was stepping out of his chariot, he was struck by an arrow sent over by Paris—a very long, wild shot. When Achilles realized that he had been wounded by Paris' arrow—a broken fragment was sticking out of his heel—he was angry as fury. 'Curse that pretty-boy Paris', he said, 'I ought to have killed all the brothers.'

"We didn't take the affair too seriously," said Aesculapius. "My son Mack had recently operated on Menelaus himself for an arrow wound which had just failed to penetrate his abdominal wall. The arrow had struck his belt buckle, but the barb had entered the muscle. Mack knew the trick of pushing out the barbed head with the least laceration of the tissues; and we had a preparation of some of the best herbs and wine for treating the wound. So he was getting ready to operate on Achilles when someone called my attention to the fact that the bone of the heel was involved. This, by agreement, made it an orthopedic problem, as I was obliged to admit. I told the head of the orthopedic service that he had better let us keep the case, but he would not give it up, shook his head, and said, 'We'll fix it.' So Achilles was removed to the orthopedic tent. After he had gone, I turned to the group and said, 'You know, in our Clinic we have had a large experience with these operations. In 2000 cases (I suppose I ought not to mention such large figures, but I must do so) we have had less than one percent of fatalities. And among the last 1000 secondary aneurysms treated by operation, we have lost no patients and only 10 limbs.'

"But now I must tell you what happened to Achilles. In attempting to remove the barbed arrowhead, the orthopedic surgeon was unable to push it ahead behind the great tendon. Result, Achilles suffered pretty badly, the tendon was lacerated,

and a deep irregular wound was left. Then the favorite orthopedic dressing was applied, a sort of cast or boot of mud, of which the orthopedic service was very proud, and which they now call 'plaster of Paris,' because Paris had shot the arrow. As far as I know, this is the first mention of today's familiar apparatus. Doubtless it would have worked very well had the deep wound been less complicated; but gangrene developed and in five days Achilles was dead."

Despite this tragedy, the Greeks fought on. You know of the wooden horse and its part in taking the city. Incidentally, both sons of Aesculapius were in it, as fighting men rather than surgeons. Evidently the doctors were permitted in those days to fight. And some of the fighting men were held to be good surgeons, notably Achilles himself!

After the Trojans had been defeated, the Greeks naturally celebrated. All sorts of athletic contests were held—boxing and wrestling matches, horse races, and men's foot races. Odysseus seems to have got a little tight, entering a chariot race in which a smart driver named Antilochus edged his team into a ditch on the home stretch. His finish, in third place, seems to have irritated him profoundly, particularly because the first prize was a beautiful girl put up by one of his brother generals. This is our first hint of Odysseus's amatory characteristics, of which more later. Following the chariot races he actually won a running race, for which the younger generation gave him lots of credit—but no girl. Later, of course, there were many dinners with plenty of wine. The Spartan group held a very special celebration. Aesculapius relates that his men kept out of such things, but says that "he could hear the Spartan cheers all over the camp and someone calling for 'Three long Agamemnons and three times for Sparta.'"

There followed the difficult period of demobilization. The smart and favored men got an early start. Among these was our old friend Odysseus. You have heard, however, how long he was in getting

MAKINGS Continued

home. And though my tactful ancestor, in writing the Odyssey, made a good story of it, he makes Aesculapius, in the Psorad, tell a rather different tale: "Everyone had become rather demoralized during the years away from home. It was not surprising, therefore, that Odysseus and his men stopped over at a summer resort on one of the Aegean Islands. Here they met Circe who had collected a most attractive household of girls from round about. Aeneas ran into just the same sort of thing but he called the girls 'Syrens.' Odysseus ceratinly

ought to have avoided Circe's establishment since he had put many such resorts off limits during the siege. Circe's turning the men into swine was a mild way of describing what occurred. Actually, Odysseus and his fighting men took in, as well, another resort run by a lady named Calypso and ended up at my clinic at Cos, where we finally got them in order and sent them home. I never thought that Penelope and the other womenfolk swallowed the story they told, but of course we kept a strict professional secrecy about it."

(Enough for now, S. Q. L.)

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